Viewpoint: National Education Policy

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India's first National Education Policy (NEP) in 28 years does have some new and interesting features but the acid test of its efficacy will lie in its implementation. The key principles of the NEP include respect for diversity and local content and flavour in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy. It is also based on encouragement and facilitation for philanthropic, private and community participation at all levels. This is in tune with the national vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. The NEP will emphasize conceptual understanding rather than rote learning and cramming for examinations. There will be a continuous review of the system

based on sustained research and regular assessment by educational experts. Increased emphasis will be laid on mathematics and computational thinking throughout the school years. Problem solving will be inculcated through a variety of innovative methods, including the regular use of puzzles and games. The system will support children with special needs by developing alternative forms of schools to preserve different pedagogical learning styles. Digital platforms and ongoing ICT-based educational initiatives will be optimized and expanded. Adult education and lifelong learning will also be supported through innovative initiatives with the help of community participation and technology integration. The focus of the policy is essentially to prepare and skill India for the rapidly changing world we inhabit. The policy also recognizes India's multilingual diversity by leaving the choice of three languages to be learnt to states, regions and students … as long as at least two of the three languages are native to India.While all this is laudable, the key to sustainable change is the personalization of education. What can be measured can be improved. Policymakers should develop the syllabus to accommodate the learning style of every student, and vary methods of instruction accordingly. As things stand, it is not humanly possible for any teacher to pay attention to each student in the class, and so schools should consider employing technologies like artificial intelligence and chatbots who can assist both teachers and students in real time. Furthermore, students should be taught the purpose of education and that success is not measured only in monetary terms. Over time, the government needs to allocate more resources to this sector as education and training comprises the bedrock determining the productivity of tomorrow's workforce. India presently spends just 3% of its GDP on education, which is inadequate considering the magnitude of the looming challenges. To quote Einstein, *education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think*. Hopefully, NEP 2020 will facilitate that paradigm shift.

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